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On the ten letters written by Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Reich (1924-1930)

ALBERTO ANGELINI

We have no knowledge of the background which preceded the letters written by Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Reich between 1924 and 1930. They were written in reply to messages on various topics which the Master received from Reich. This is how they have come down to us, after having been conserved for almost a century in the Sigmund Freud Archives, which are kept at the Library of Congress in the United States. The current curator is Harold Blum, who succeeded Kurt Eissler. However, even before delving into a historical reflection, an initial reading of the founder of psychoanalysis's words is sufficient to grasp the type of issues that the young Reich was putting to him; mainly evaluations and comments relating to a vast amount of articles, essays, study plans, lines of research and embryonic ideas that Reich submitted to Freud's judgment. In those years the young Reich was writing and publishing papers at a feverish pace. This is clearly evidenced, first of all, by the vast collection of his *Early Writings* (1920-1925). Other significant examples of his essays during this period are *Coitus and the Sexes* (1921), *The Psychogenic Tic as a Masturbation Equivalent* (1925), the volume *The Function of the Orgasm* (1927) and his essay on methodology entitled *Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis* (1929). Added to this wealth of written material was a whirl of personal activity, both in the clinical and institutional spheres, within the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. As may be seen from the letters published here, Freud was prudent in his comments on his young pupil's ideas, while at the same time supporting his youthful enthusiasm.

Alongside these plausibly scientific subjects, Freud's words offer us some insight into the inner workings of the psychoanalytic institution in which Reich was involved. In 1922 he had been appointed as assistant in the psychoanalytic clinic which had recently been set up by Freud himself and, in 1924, he had become director of the Psychoanalytic Technical Seminar. In virtue of this appointment, Reich taught at the Institute of Psychoanalytic Training in Vienna until 1930.

The letters date back to this period. Among other things, they provide an inkling of the progressive difficulties that Reich was coming up against, both in the institution itself and in his interpersonal relations, as a result of his personality and his

ideas. Moreover, conflict with the external environment, in all circumstances, was a feature of his entire life.

During the years covered by the correspondence that we are examining, Wilhelm Reich was deeply engaged in developing a theory to link and harmonise, in one single concept, the historical and social vision of Marxism with innovative psychoanalytic conceptions concerning the individual mind. In this he appeared to be greatly influenced by the new ideas in the spheres of psychology, history and culture that the Russian revolution of 1917 was spreading all over Europe.

At that time, a deep conflict existed between the ideas of the theoreticians of soviet Marxism and European and Austrian Marxists. Reich engaged in the debate on a number of occasions and, especially, with his essay *Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis* (1929), written during his period of maximum engagement as a psychoanalyst in Vienna. The debate, which saw the Soviet and European Marxists on different sides, centred around the importance to be accorded to the «subjective human factor» in the economic and historical development of society. Without entering into the details of a complex philosophical and by now historical controversy, it is however opportune here to delineate the concepts addressed, in order to show the meaning of Reich's deep involvement in the issue. Essentially, the Soviets, and in particular A.M. Deborin (1924) and V. Jurinetz (1925), with whom Reich was to enter into heated debate, attempted to limit and diminish the importance of the subjective human factor in history. According to them, the individual was powerless in the face of the great historical and economic processes involving society. They occurred, to some extent, automatically, with reference to the laws intrinsic to the historic dialectic of the social world. I. Sapir (1929-30) was also to include himself in this perspective, in replying to the ideas expressed by Reich in *Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis* (1929). For the dominant Soviet ideology of the period there was no possibility of a meeting between historical materialism and psychoanalysis. Moreover, even a figure such as V.N. Volosinov, which was the pen name used by the great Russian semiologist M.M. Bachtin, considered the unconscious as a concept useful only to explain individual mental disorders and not as a force operating at the social level. Deborin and Jurinetz were, paradoxically, the more moderate wing of this mechanistic Soviet current which, within the space of a few years, would manage to have Freud's name disappear from specialized journals and to crystallise all Russian psychology for almost half a century (Angelini, 1988).

In Austria, people of the calibre of Karl Korsch (1923) and Max Adler (1925) placed themselves in opposition to this mechanical interpretation of historical materialism in Marxist thought.

At the same time, despite the fact that individual psychic matters had always been outside the scope of his interests, the great philosopher György Lukács (1923) was attracted by the debate on the «de-reification» of society, carried out by means of the

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unmasking of the immutability of social laws. The issue under discussion was what was the place of human subjectivity in history.

On the other hand, in those years psychoanalysis had taken a strong foothold in Russian society and culture (Angelini, 2002). After the October Revolution, psychoanalysis experienced a brilliant few years in the Soviet Union. The Psychoanalytic Society in Moscow, which had begun its meetings in 1911, took on a new lease of life, and a second Psychoanalytic Society was founded in Kazan by Alexander R. Luria. A substantial group of young enthusiasts participated in the establishing of psychoanalytic thought in Russia. Among them were: V. Schmidt, S. Spilrein, P.P. Blonskij, M.A. Rejsner, B.E. Bychovskij, B.D. Fridman, and A.B. Zalkind (Angelini, 2008). A number of them, like Luria, were also published in western journals and in the German language. Even that great personage, Lev S. Vygotskij, the founder of the «historical cultural» school of psychology, was involved in psychoanalysis. In 1925, Vygotskij and Luria, both of whom at that time frequented the meetings of the Moscow Psychoanalytic Society, wrote the introduction to the Russian translation of Freud's volume *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). Still in 1925, K.N. Kornilov edited a collection of essays under the title *Psichologija i Marksizm*, in which a number of authors, including Luria himself, address the methodological issues of psychoanalysis, from a philosophical and sociological perspective. These ideas, generated by the scientific and cultural environment in Russia, circulated in various journals and by virtue of translations, in all left-wing environments in Europe.

Wilhelm Reich was greatly influenced by them, exactly in the same period in which he corresponded with Freud. In particular, he owed a debt of gratitude to the thought of Alexander Luria in consecutive works: *Psichoanaliz kak sistema monisticeskij psihologi* (1925), *Die moderne russische Physiologie und die Psychoanalyse* (1926) and *Die moderne Psychologie und der dialektische Materialismus* (1928). Luria's 1926 article was published in *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, of which Reich was a reader, being a psychoanalyst. Luria's other article, dated 1928, was published in the journal *Unterdem Banner des Marxismus*, which was the German version of a Russian journal of the same name, and was considered the official organ of German speaking communist intellectuals. Reich became a member of the Austrian communist party in 1927. Not by chance, Reich's principal work on methodology in that period, *Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis* (1929) was published in *Unterdem banner des Marxismus*. Many of the ideas put forward by Reich in *Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis* echo the concepts advanced by Luria in his articles of the previous years. In particular, Luria (1925), assuming an attitude favourable to psychoanalysis, had stressed the biological causality of impulses and, in investigating their «organic sources», had taken up the subject of the «charge/discharge» model on which Reich, in 1927, based his deliberations in *The Function of the Orgasm*. Obviously, one does not wish to align the het-

erogeneous work of Reich to the general conceptions of Alexander Luria, the founder of contemporary neuropsychology, but only to highlight some significant points of contact between them. Neither is there any intention to devalue the originality of the thinking of Reich, who at that time demonstrated an independence of movement.

What is clear, however, moving on from the biography to the historical dimension, is the incompatibility of these concepts with the theoretical perspectives maintained at the time by Freud in relation to psychoanalysis, from both a clinical and an institutional point of view. If, as would appear from the clues that we have, Reich submitted his writings on methodology, impregnated by Marxism, to Freud, they were not greeted warmly, as several passages from their correspondence would suggest.

In factual terms, the attitude of Freud, and of the psychoanalytic environment in Vienna in general was progressively more and more ambivalent towards the young Reich. While he was respected for his organizational and technical skills, at the same time, his extreme political passion embarrassed and alarmed the quiet world of Viennese psychoanalysis. In addition, also on the clinical level and during the years of his exchange of letters with Freud, Reich was developing ideas which were very much at odds with his master's thinking.

This emerges, primarily, in *The Function of the Orgasm* (1927). Robinson (1969, 17) commented: «All of Reich's intellectual development could be defined as an elaboration of Freud's concept of the libido». Effectively, Reich's entire output never abandoned the need to attribute a quantity, in the philosophical sense, that is to say, an extension and divisibility, to the libido. Reich wished, literally, to observe and measure the libido. In pursuing this intent, he ended up superimposing the notion of libido on that of sexuality, and making the two coincide. Moreover, the early Freud was a product of 19th century biological reductionism and, in 1910, had himself fallen in love with physicality, supporting the «energetics» doctrine of the chemist, physicist and philosopher Wilhelm Ostwald (1853-1932), who had invited him to co-operate in the pages of his journal *Annalen für Naturphilosophie* (Angelini, 1985).

In the years spanning 1924 and 1930, when at a mature age Freud wrote, among other works, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1925), *The Future of an Illusion* (1927) and *Civilisation and its Discontents* (1929), Reich launched himself, body and soul, into an attempt to demonstrate that all neurotic disorders, without exclusion, were accompanied by difficulties in the area of sexual activity. Also, making a superficial assessment of Freud's interests in that period, it would appear evident that the paths taken by the master and his pupil differ significantly in orientation. Reich, however, wished always to remain faithful to Freud's early idea of «accumulation» and «discharge», as set out in *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1895).

The reflection centred on the Freudian concepts of *psychoneurosis* and *actual neurosis*. By the term *psychoneurosis* Freud meant those psychic affections in which

the symptoms present particular transference (Freud 1915-17). This term is (Freud 1898; 1912) dysfunction of the sexual fail to indicate that Reich attacks this theory of psycho-neurosis and he identifies sexual along with Freud's

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¹ Three Italian psychoanalytic Assoc.

the symptoms present themselves as a symbolic expression of childhood conflicts, in particular transference neurosis and narcissistic neuroses (Freud 1894, 1896, 1898, 1915-17). This term is used by him, essentially, in contrast to that of *actual neurosis* (Freud 1898; 1912; 1915-17), in which the aetiology is instead sought in a somatic dysfunction of the sexual function. Freud himself, and later on, Ernest Jones, did not fail to indicate the clinical correlation between the two forms (Angelini, 1984). Reich attacks this correlation with the intention of demonstrating that whatever type of psycho-neurotic symptom must have behind it a source of energy which feeds it, and he identifies sexuality as this source. The psychoanalytic environment in Vienna, along with Freud himself, felt that these theories devalued the symbolic perspective.

To tell the truth, this Reichian approach, in accepting the Freudian notion of pre-genital regression, did not challenge the symbolic value of neurotic symptoms, and neither did it identify, reductively, psychoneurosis with actual neurosis. Reich concentrated on the quantitative aspects of these two forms because he hoped, with this theory, to keep psychoanalysis coherent with the philosophical conceptions of Marxist dialectical materialism. All of his activity, both practical and theoretical, was, at that time, conditioned by his political engagement and he saw, in the meeting between Marxism and psychoanalysis, a powerful opportunity for progress for both doctrines.

As one may well imagine, the cautious psychoanalytic environment in Vienna began, progressively, to perceive Wilhelm Reich as a foreign body. It was Paul Federn who suggested, in 1928, that Reich should be removed from the leadership of the Psychoanalytic Technical Seminar. Some personal friendships resisted; in particular that with Otto Fenichel, but his political activity frightened colleagues who had not openly sided with left wing political positions.

What's more, in 1928 Reich had founded the Socialist Organisation for Sexual Research and Consultancy which was to engage him firstly in Vienna and then, from 1930, in Berlin, under the name Sexpol, in an intense activity of consultation and seminars. In effect, Reich moved to Berlin not only to be in what was at the time considered to be the centre of the world and the place which hosted the most active and numerous group of psychoanalysts in Europe, but also to get away from the distrust and suspicion towards him of a large number of Viennese psychoanalysts. The move was to no avail, with respect to his wish to reacquire a solid position within the international psychoanalytic organisation. Within a few years, despite his efforts, Reich's position was to become unsustainable. To his psychoanalyst colleagues, his political stance made him appear to be a dangerous revolutionary extremist. In 1934, during the XIII Congress, which was held in Lucerne, Reich was definitively expelled from the International Psychoanalytical Association.¹

¹ Three Italian scholars, Edoardo Weiss, Nicola Perrotti and Emilio Servadio, attended the International Psychoanalytic Association Congress in Lucerne in 1934. The author of this article was able to collect an account of the

The irony was that the previous year, in 1933, he had also been expelled from the German communist party. Paradoxically, in this case, the reasons were the contrary. His communist comrades saw in Reich the psychoanalyst, a man interested in sexuality and the human mind, a corrupt, individualistic bourgeois. It is worth recalling that his faith in communist and revolutionary politics suffered a sharp blow in 1929, when he made a visit to the Soviet Union. There, among others, Reich had met Vera Schmidt and made contact with a number of post-revolutionary pedagogical institutions, but the country of the Soviet, towards which all the progressive spirits of the time looked with hope, was being turned into a dictatorship. The social reforms of the early years after the revolution were losing out to a return to the old rules of behaviour and an oppressive morality, also legally approved. This experience led Reich to write *The Sexual Revolution* (1936), in which he expressed his criticism.

After his move to Berlin, in 1930, the contact between Freud and his pupil became more infrequent. Moreover, Freud had not expressed particular opposition to this move, substantially endorsing Federn's position, hostile to Reich, and limiting himself to generic reassurances and greetings to his pupil. In effect, in those years Freud, in addition to being a great scholar who periodically published works which were fundamental to the development of psychoanalysis, was also deeply involved in directing the establishment of a solid and lasting international psychoanalytic institution, with all its rules and rituals.

A detailed chronicle which, among other things, illustrates the life of Freud between 1924 and 1930 is offered to us by E. Jones in *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* (1953). On a personal level, the founder of psychoanalysis is depicted as a man suffering greatly as a result of the illness which has struck him, and deeply involved in the numerous issues and controversies connected with the consolidation of the international psychoanalytic institution which was to protect the future development of the discipline. Sparks, of love and hate, flew continually among the members of the psychological institution; in addition, an infinite number of problems arose connected with the publication of the many papers. From this point of view, the issue with Reich was, for Freud, just one of a number of situations to be dealt with. Among other things, Reich had always been a severe critic of the revised drive theory, proposed by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). In it, modifying the primitive conceptions set out in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), in

event, directly from Servadio. During the Congress, the rumour went round that Wilhelm Reich was to be expelled from the Association. Personal relations between him and the German speaking attendees were extremely strained and, in some cases, decidedly conflictual. During the Association dinner the participants tended to sit at table together based on nationality and language. When Reich entered the room, however, he searched in vain for a place among his Austrian and German colleagues. None of them wished to have him join their table and a state of tension arose. It was the group of Italians who defused the situation, inviting Wilhelm Reich to their table. Thus he spent his last social evening as a member of the International Psychoanalytic Association together with Weiss, Perrotti and Servadio.

which the libidinal drive is one of two fundamental drives, the death drive. According to Reich, the destructive desire is directed towards others and the self, as destructiveness is a conditioning exerted by the environment, echoed not only Marx.

Shortly after his move to London, Reich published *Character* (1932). In this book, Jones reports that Reich made a statement that was "a serious system". This was seen as an inherent tendency to add an editorial note to the analysis, which was not doing. Reich himself consulted, were not of war on the Soviet Union. Ferenczi's suggestion to insist that even a non-scientific belief but followed by a

As we have seen, intellectual history of Freud is only the cases, had originated here.

With regard to the manner much of *Character* (1925) Ego, in full agreement with *Symptoms and* of psychoanalysis, in the light of personality previous that the anxiety was hindered in repression. This engenders the process

which the libido was identified as the only quantitatively variable force, the existence of two fundamental drives was theorized: Eros, the life drive, and Thanatos, the death drive. According to this theory, Thanatos manifests itself in the form of destructive desires, first of all towards oneself (primary masochism) and, later, towards others and the external world. This was unacceptable for the Marxist Reich, as destructiveness, when it occurred, was considered to be the result of negative conditioning exerted on the individual by the external world. A perspective which echoed not only Marx but also Rousseau.

Shortly after moving to Berlin, Reich had proposed his work *The Masochistic Character* (1932) for publication in *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*. E. Jones reports that the paper, «according to Freud, “has culminated in the non-sensical statement that what we have called the death instinct is a product of the capitalistic system”. This was certainly very different from Freud’s view that it constituted an inherent tendency of all living beings, animal and vegetable. He naturally wanted to add an editorial comment disclaiming any political interests on the part of psychoanalysis, which, speaking as an editor myself, I should have had no hesitation in doing. Reich himself agreed to this, but Eitingon, Jekels, and Bernfeld, whom Freud consulted, were against it, and Bernfeld said it would be equivalent to a declaration of war on the Soviets! Where upon Freud became uncertain, nor would he accept Ferenczi’s suggestion that the International Executive should request him formally to insist that every contributor to the *Zeitschrift* should mention his adherence to any non-scientific body. The matter was finally settled by Reich’s paper being published, but followed by a full criticism by Bernfeld» (Jones, 1957, 177-178).

As we have ascertained, the young Reich’s ideas caused some headaches to the intellectual hierarchy of the psychoanalytic institution. The episode reported by Freud is only the culmination of one of the various conflicts which, in a number of cases, had originated prior to the period relating to the correspondence being examined here.

With regard to other, more limited aspects, the disciple expressed himself in a manner much more in harmony with the master’s ideas. In the essay *The Impulsive Character* (1925), Reich addresses, among other things, the concept of the Super-Ego, in full agreement with many proposals put forward by Freud, in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1925), published in the same year. In this work, the founder of psychoanalysis again takes up the topic of neurotic anxiety, changing its interpretation, in the light of the comprehensive and revised psychoanalytic theory of personality previously set out in *The Ego and the Id* (1923). Initially, Freud had thought that the anxiety of the neurotic patient consisted in a conversion of the libido, which was hindered in manifesting itself as a result of its sexual nature, by the action of repression. This hypothesis, however, failed to explain the mechanism which triggers the process of repression. It is the identification of the Super-Ego which enables

us to grasp the real aetiology of anxiety. The seat of anxiety, which had previously been indicated in the drive itself, was now sought in the Ego. Only the Ego is able to experience the feeling of imminent danger which always accompanies any type of anxiety, including neurotic anxiety. The relationship between repression and anxiety is thus turned upside down: no longer that one as a cause of this one, and it was supposed that it was the Ego's anxiety which itself triggered the repression of the instincts coming from the Id, perceived by the Ego as a danger to be feared. Effectively, the Ego is afraid of punishment by the Super-Ego, should the instincts, prohibited by it, be satisfied.

This outline seemed to Reich to be fully in line with his own thinking. He considered the Super-Ego as an individual mental structure designed to defend the rules imposed by moral social conscience on the person. To Reich the Super-Ego represented and defended the prohibitions that civilisation imposes on the instincts. This constituted the main instrument of what he was to entitle *The Invasion of Compulsory Sex-Morality* (1932).

The most significant differences between the two men have to do with social and historical issues relating to religion and the development of human civilisation, which Freud was addressing systematically in the second half of the 1920s. In *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), Freud's pessimism centres on religion, to which he denies any objective value of truth. Inspired by the tenets of the Enlightenment, updated in accordance with the materialistic orientation of end-of-century German positivism, Freud connects religion to the human need for compensation for anxiety. In this perspective, religion is conceived as a consoling thought, similar to the one with which the child reacts to his own feelings of helplessness and takes refuge in his father's arms.

Historically, Reich's own thinking would have been in line with these ideas, as his orientation followed the canons of materialist philosophy, far from any agreement with conventional proposals of spirituality. However, the pupil suffered deeply as a result of the master's subsequent intellectual proposal: *Civilisation and Its Discontents* (1929). The central theme running through this work is the irreconcilable antagonism between the individual's desire for happiness and the barriers put in place by civilisation. According to Freud's anthropological thinking, the pleasure principle is in contrast with the whole world. It is threatened by three sources of suffering; that is to say, the excessive power of external nature, the impotence of inner nature (illness and death) and subjective relations, which are characterized by aggressiveness and conflict. As a result of all of this, man places himself under the protection of civilisation and exchanges a large part of the chances of being happy for a little security. This is a deeply pessimistic interpretation, with respect to the relationship between the needs arising from the individual's instincts and the greater needs of society and civilisation.

This Freudian pessimism was not shared by Reich in those years. Reich's thinking starts with Marx's critique of capitalist society, and its social and intellectual consequences, as a unilateral and progressively alienated life. Consequently, he proposed an appropriate historical and social change of the conditions which create the «man». In the position of a man committed to social change, Reich proposed a non-coercive approach into account. The approach of Reich and Sabina Spielmann, that, in the decade of the 1930s, created a concrete project, which was also a result of the social movement which was developing in the 1930s and in the ideas of Reich, inspired by Marx (see Angelini, 2009), were deeply influenced by psychoanalysis. Reich, in agreement with the thinking of Freud, including those of the 1930s, psychoanalytic proposals, instincts, just as Freud. Indeed, he believed that on numerous occasions he received inspiration, at least on technical differences, his evaluations are a consequence of the individuality of the individual. The papers examined here received this opportunity.

At a historical level, Reich's thinking occurred in the 1930s and was supported by Freud.

Ilse Ollendorfer began to operate in the 1930s.

This Freudian pessimism could not be accepted at all within Reich's theoretical conceptions. As a Marxist and supporter of bolshevism right from its inception, in those years Reich was influenced by the myth of the Soviet «new man». The myth starts with Marx and Engels who, in *The German Ideology* (1846), maintained that in capitalistic society, because of the division of work and of the split between physical and intellectual work, the individual fulfils his own intelligence and personality only unilaterally and partially, satisfying the limited needs which emerge in a split and alienated life. Communism, on the other hand, would enable the individual to re-appropriate his alienated nature and to unify material and intellectual activities. Thus the conditions would be created in which a new man could emerge: «omnilateral man». In the post-revolutionary period, Soviet psychologists and pedagogists were committed to setting up a new school, aimed at achieving this goal through the proposal of non-coercive and libertarian education which took individual potentiality into account. The psychoanalytic nursery school in Moscow, in which Vera Schmidt and Sabina Spielrein worked, is an example of these initiatives. One must consider that, in the decade following the October Revolution, the new man became a concrete project, which involved a large part of Soviet society in its achievement. It was also as a result of this that such lively interest was shown by the cultural renewal movement which grew up in the wake of the revolution, in the new educational theories and in the ideas of psychoanalysis. On the other hand, psychoanalysts who were inspired by Marxism, such as Reich and at that time also Otto Fenichel (Angelini, 2009), were deeply influenced by the myth of the new man. They believed that with psychoanalysis they could change the world. This utopian dimension is congruous with the thinking of Reich; it appears, more or less markedly, in all his writings, including those of the latter part of his life and subsequent to his distancing from the psychoanalytic perspective. Reich believes in liberation from needs arising from instincts, just as Soviet communists believed in liberation from material needs; indeed, he believed it necessary to free the individual from both these needs and on numerous occasions envisages a liberated individual which takes a large part of its inspiration, at least in certain aspects, from the utopia of the Soviet new man. The technical differences between the pupil's thinking and the master's philosophical evaluations are of lesser importance than Reich's faith in the utopia of a plausible liberty of the individual. In this he differed deeply from Freud's pessimism and from the papers examined here it would appear that the founder of psychoanalysis had perceived this opposition.

At a historical level, one must bear in mind that the criticism and disapproval of Reich occurred at the end of a long curve, at the start of which he had been appreciated and supported by Freud.

Ilse Ollendorf Reich, his second wife, writes in her biography: «When Reich began to operate within the psychoanalytic movement, Freud considered him to be

one of his more brilliant assistants: Reich was for him a "favourite son" and was given free access to Freud's home, where he was invariably welcomed to discuss various issues, whenever the need arose. At that time, Freud considered the insistence on the sexual origin of neurosis to be Reich's *Steckenpferd* (hobbyhorse)» (I.O. Reich, 1968, 38). Even if we take into account the passion with which Ollendorf describes the events of her husband's life, it is plausible to believe that the young enthusiast was liked by the founder of psychoanalysis. In fact, Freud wrote to Lou Andreas Salomé, in 1928: «We have here a Dr. Reich, a worthy but impetuous young man, passionately devoted to his hobby-horse, who now salutes in the genital orgasm the antidote to every neurosis» (Freud, Salomé, 1972, 174).

The explosion of the disagreement between the two dates back to the start of 1927, and it is attributed to a personal reason, as well as the ideological and theoretical motives outlined above. In fact Ollendorf (1968) points out that according to Annie Reich (his first wife), the serious fracture was caused by Freud's refusal to undertake Reich's personal analysis; initially, Freud had seemed willing to accept, but later decided that he could not or would not breach the rule which he himself had put in place, i.e. that he would never accept a member of his Viennese circle for personal analysis. Reich, on his side, attributed the rift to differences of opinion on matters of theory, particularly with regard to the social implications of psychoanalysis and the attempts of other analysts, including Paul Federn, to discredit him in Freud's eyes. Ollendorf also puts forward the idea that Reich suffered from a father complex in relation to Freud, and that this made the master's refusal intolerable and led to the pupil's falling into a deep state of depression. Wherever the truth of the matter lay, 1927, the year in which *The Function of the Orgasm* was published, was also the year in which Reich's parabola, in relation to both Freud and the Viennese psychoanalytic circle, began to take a downturn. This negative curve continued its descent even when Reich moved to Berlin, in 1930, and can be considered concluded only with Reich's expulsion from the International Psychoanalytic Association in 1934. After this, he began a completely different life. The correspondence presented here suggests that the start of his downfall may be found in letter 5 which, as will be shown, sets out Freud's objection to the genital resolution of symptoms in actual neurosis.

In the letters prior to the fifth, Freud's tone had been softer and more colloquial; starting from letter 1, dated 26 June 1924, in which the master seems to light-heartedly remind the pupil, who is busy writing, not to neglect the contributions and studies of others. Among other things, the founder of psychoanalysis writes: «psychoanalytic therapy has just become more flexible through the current innovations of Ferenczi and Rank» (Danto, 2011, 168). Few words, but they offer some insight into the lively internal dynamics of the world of psychoanalysis at that time. Freud was very fond of Ferenczi; the two men exchanged more than 1500 letters over twenty-five years. Right from the start, Ferenczi was a member of the committee set up in 1912

by Ernest Jones to supervise Reich's analysis. However, the innovations proposed by Reich, the idea of an «active technique» still sparks, lively and in Freud's heart, had been a matter of analysis during the late 1920s. The issue of psychoanalysis between Ferenczi and Rank to get to the bottom of the misunderstandings and Rank's resignation. It is plausible to think that the ongoing controversies were a matter of time. We may deduce from publishing a volume that could be an appropriate title (Danto, 2011, 168). This suggests that Reich had been an important figure, therefore it is reasonable to connect with the master's letter with an invitation to the chance, the letter from Berlin, set himself up in that city. According to Freud's thinking, in the first place, he would have had been so passionate that he intended to enter the

What attracts the pupil, the dynamics of the master, with a master proposed by Reich, in *Letter: A Psychoanalytic* in 1927. In this year, the psychic dynamics of the many with many others. Freud criticised, but concluded that the advance in our understanding culminate in the

by Ernest Jones to defend the thinking of Freud and the development of psychoanalysis. However, the founder of psychoanalysis did not agree with the technical innovations proposed by Ferenczi. The latter, in those years, was putting forward the idea of an «active technique» in psychoanalytic therapy. This proposal sparked, and still sparks, lively and controversial debate. Ferenczi, who was always close to Freud's heart, had a long and animated disagreement with the founder of psychoanalysis during the latter part of his, Ferenczi's life, up until his death in 1933, on the issue of psychoanalytic technique. It was not by chance that Freud mentioned Ferenczi and Rank together. In those years Rank and Freud were experiencing personal misunderstandings and conflicts in matters relating to theory, culminating with Rank's resignation from the International Psychoanalytic Association in 1929. It is plausible to think that the restlessness of the young Reich evoked in Freud the ongoing controversies with the other two historical figures of the psychoanalytic movement. We may deduce from Freud's words that Reich had probably stated his aim of publishing a volume compiling the various psychoanalytic techniques: «It might not be an appropriate time for attempting a somehow more simplified approach» (Danto, 2011, 168). This may be true, as just in that year, 1924, with his ascent in full spate, Reich had been appointed as director of the Psychoanalytic Technical Seminar, and therefore it is reasonable to suppose that his mind was focussed on didactic issues connected with the spreading of psychoanalytic knowledge. Freud continues his letter with an invitation to be prudent, and reiterates how difficult the task is. Not by chance, the letter concludes by citing Hanns Sachs who, a few years after moving to Berlin, set himself the task of organizing the first training centre for analysts in that city. According to Fine (1979) Sachs never strayed at all from the orthodoxy of Freud's thinking, and in establishing the first structure set himself two goals: in the first place, he wanted to teach the lines of understanding of the unconscious, which had been so painstakingly discovered by Freud and his first collaborators, and then he intended to enforce absolute obedience to the school's position on theory.

What attracts Freud's attention, in *letter 2*, dated 14 December 1924, is, in particular, the dynamic of the relationship between Ego and Super-Ego. The opinion of the master, with a number of reservations concerning the future use of certain terms proposed by Reich, is favourable. Freud probably read a draft of *The Impulsive Character: A Psychoanalytic Study of Ego Pathology* (1925), a work published the following year. In this text, as previously mentioned, Reich developed the study of the psychic dynamics pertaining to the formation of the Super-Ego, substantially in harmony with many concepts previously addressed by Freud in *The Ego and the Id* (1923). Freud criticised a «lack of clarity and [...] an excess of questions» in the first part; but concluded with words of praise: «In any case, your work signifies an important advance in our understanding and identification of the mental illnesses that perhaps culminate in moral insanity» (Danto, 2011, 169). With this definition, Freud took up

again an older terminology, proposed in 1835 by J.C. Prichard, to describe those individuals in whom, while their intellectual operations remain unaltered, their behaviour and affectivity appear deeply subverted.

From *letter 3*, dated 21 December 1924, we see the re-emergence of Reich's wish to write a volume, presumably a manual, on psychoanalytic technique and the hope that the master will approve of his project. Freud lets it be known that he is not convinced of the urgency of this initiative, but declares that, in any event, «I would prefer that you write it instead of an unknown, probably less well informed person» (Danto, 2011, 170). This impelling aspiration of Reich's to publish a volume on technique stemmed from the complex scientific and existential circumstances that Reich was currently experiencing. At that time, in addition to directing the Psychoanalytic Technical Seminar, Reich was also the vice-director of the Ambulatorium, a Clinic directed by Eduard Hitschmann and founded in 1922, whose aim was to offer psychoanalytic treatment to anyone who was in need of it, regardless of their economic circumstances. This initiative was born in the wake of a similar project which got underway in Berlin in 1920: the «Psychoanalytic Polyclinic». In these concrete proposals offered to the population echoed certain general principles that Freud himself had expressed during a conference held at the Budapest Congress in 1918, when he had expressed a hope that psychoanalytic treatment would become available to a broader spectrum of the population than the usual well-to-do classes. Around the time Freud was holding his Congress, the Hungarian Soviet Republic was being inaugurated, and it appointed Sándor Ferenczi to the chair of psychoanalysis at the University of Budapest. Historically, this was the first academic space conquered by the psychoanalytic movement, even if the appointment only lasted as long as the government itself, approximately one hundred days. During that brief revolution, György Lukács was also engaged as Commissioner for Culture.

Later, on the tenth anniversary of its setting up, the founder of psychoanalysis acknowledged the human and social values expressed by the Berlin Psychoanalytic Polyclinic, which was working «to make the therapy accessible to the great multitude who suffer under their neuroses no less than the wealthy, but who are not in a position to meet the cost of their treatment» (Freud 1930, 257).

It was in this context that, in Berlin in 1920, at 29 W. Potsdamer Strasse, the «Psychoanalytic Polyclinic», had been set up under the auspices of the Institute. It contained a real «Primary Consultation Centre» (Angelini, 2002a), aimed at establishing an organic contact between the psychoanalytic institutions and the external world; it was directed by Eitingon and Simmel. One must also bear in mind the presence of Karl Abraham, Franz Alexander, Paul Federn, Edith Jacobson, Karen Horney and Melanie Klein. A strong influence was exerted by some analysts ideologically close to the Marxist left, such as Helene Deutsch, Erich Fromm, Siegfried Bernfeld and Wilhelm and Annie Reich, after their move from Vienna, in 1930. The

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Berlin Polyclinic represented the first concrete contribution of psychoanalysis to the transformation of western society.

The Ambulatorium in Vienna was set up along the lines of this previous initiative. It was situated in a basement without windows, and those who carried out clinical work, welcoming those in need of a consultation, were more or less the same people who took part in the Psychoanalytic Technical Seminar run by Reich. In his didactic activity here, he changed the way in which the clinical files were to be written up. From descriptions full of carefully listed symptoms, to narrative style portraits aimed at providing an overview of the individual's personality and fitting him into his social and work environment (Danto, 2011). There are echoes here, too, at clinical rather than theoretic level of a certain sympathy with the thinking of the Soviet psychoanalysts and, in particular, with A. Luria who was to propose this clinical approach all his life.

Letter 4, dated 28 May 1925, is a simple statement, in which Freud certifies the training and the technical and theoretical worth of his pupil, as a psychoanalyst. The text expresses clear esteem. Some months of silence then ensue, in which Reich pursues his didactic, clinical and writing activities, and slightly more than a year later, his parabola seems to have reached its zenith and is about to start its descent.

In *letter 5*, dated 9 July 1926, Freud openly criticizes his pupil. The founder of psychoanalysis states that he has read a manuscript sent to him by Reich. In all probability, this would be *The Function of the Orgasm* (1927), published some months afterwards. The text could not hope to receive a positive welcome either from Freud or from the cautious Viennese psychoanalytic environment. To a large extent, the volume appears to address issues relating to psychoanalytic technique and theory almost exclusively. All matters are treated from an energetic perspective which sees in sexuality the basis of every psychic dynamic, both normal and pathological. We find issues such as psychic disorders affecting orgasm, the somatic stasis of the libido, the psychic aetiology of actual neurosis, genital asthenia in hypochondriac neurasthenia and so on. As previously mentioned, Freud directly criticised the hypothesis of an always genital origin of neurotic symptoms; but Reich's text, if he submitted it to the master in its entirety, was alarming to the psychoanalytic institution also for other reasons.

In the second part of the volume Reich turned his attention to the social implications of sexual repression and coercive mores. His idea is that destructive and sadistic impulses depend, fundamentally, on sexual stasis; this position is in evident conflict with Freud's death instinct theory. In this perspective, he launches into a series of historical examples which refer both to the past, such as the period of the Inquisition, and to current phenomena of his time such as the expressions of sadism and nationalism which were nestling in Weimar Germany. Reich is apparently less critical of the so-called «labourist illusions». This is probably due to his starting to fre-

quent the Austrian Communist Party, of which he was to become a member the following year. While he still believes in the greater «moral and psychic health» of the proletariat, he is unable to explain «why the masses allow themselves to be dominated by individuals»; that is to say, the tragic passivity of members of authoritarian group movements, both right- and left-wing. Reich dedicated a specific essay to this topic, some years later: *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933). In the end, towards the end of the volume, Reich makes his first criticism of monogamous marriage and of the dominant sexual mores. This thread was to be taken up systematically in his publications over the following years.

There is no need for further comment to understand that a person such as Freud could not accept this type of argument, either scientifically or culturally. The letter concludes with the communication from Freud that the publisher of the International Psychoanalytic Association could not publish Reich's manuscript for economic reasons. He suggested that Reich reduce and amend the text, while awaiting an improvement in the publisher's finances. While it is true that the psychoanalytic publisher was in serious financial difficulties, and survived thanks to donations and by Freud's transfer of the copyright to his works, but even if it had been flourishing, we may presume that Reich's book would not have been published.

In *letter 6*, dated 6 February 1927, we learn that Reich is in Davos, in Switzerland, and asks Freud to recommend him to the pastor Oscar Pfister and Dr. Emily Oberholzner, with a view to their referring patients to him. In that period Reich had contracted an incipient tubercular infection of the lungs. Moreover, both his brother and his father had died of tuberculosis. Therefore, he had to be admitted to the sanatorium in Davos, where he continued to write and to study actively. He aspired to exercise the profession there, but Freud, mindful of the rules, replied: «The practice prohibition for non-Swiss citizens, however, appears to me as a big obstacle» (Danto, 2011, 172).

In *letter 7*, dated 15 July 1927, we perceive a different tone by Freud, who this time shakes off his patriarchal role. It was written on a day of particular social tension in Vienna.

Previously, on 30 January 1927, in the town of Schattendorf, during a socialist rally, a group of right-wing former combatants, nostalgic for the Kaiser, had opened fire on the crowd in cold blood, killing a child and seriously injuring many people. Surprisingly, the killers managed to escape without the crowd attacking them. However, they were subsequently captured and charged. On 14 July 1927, a court of politically reactionary magistrates acquitted the killers and freed them, after a shamefully biased trial. The next day, 15 July, when the letter was written, the Viennese workers had revolted, occupying the centre of the city. Police reinforcements were brought in from various parts of the country and in many instances they fired bullets into the crowd, causing a number of deaths. The Court Building was set on fire, but in general

the crowd did not... result of the fact that... rity service, the... and the police were... echoed in the air... postponed any meet... 173).

In *letter 8*, dated... chickens which Re... ment were coming... Reich had no diff... psychoanalytic... he was greatly ch... Ollendorf, 1968... show that Reich's... Vienna psychoan... content which, as... to the young, fut... mized the weight... sonal judgement... personal work... knowledge, and...

Letter 9, dated... lence, on Freud's... starts out by... 176) with Reich... Reich's exonera... Federn emerges... Viennese psych... wishes of my... understood that... his pupil's num... part of the letter... of psychoanaly... his daughter an... not want to han... you against you... 2011, 177). In e... which he mov... manoeuvre with...

the crowd did not show particular violence towards the police. This was also as a result of the fact that the Austrian Communist Party had given orders to its own security service, the *Schutzbund*, not to intervene. When Freud wrote the letter, the crowd and the police were facing off in the streets close to his home and the police guns echoed in the air. The founder of psychoanalysis abandoned his formal tone and postponed any meeting to September, «if the world still exists then» (Danto, 2011, 173).

In *letter 8*, dated 27 July 1927, it can be seen, unfortunately, that some of the chickens which Reich had let loose in the cautious Viennese psychoanalytic environment were coming home to roost. Undoubtedly, an exuberant character such as Reich had no difficulty in making bitter enemies. It must also be said that several psychoanalytic colleagues as well as his first wife, Annie Pink Reich, considered that he was greatly changed and psychologically tried since his return from Davos (I.O. Ollendorf, 1968, 40). A historical assessment of the situation, however, tends to show that Reich's character had only a partial influence. Freud and the leaders of the Vienna psychoanalytic institution were concerned about the extremist ideological content which, as director of the Psychoanalytic Technical Seminar, he could pass on to the young, future analysts who were undergoing their training. Thus, having minimized the weight which the opinions of his adversaries may have exerted on his personal judgement, Freud writes to Reich: «it is justifiable to ask you to separate your personal work from teaching, to instruct your students in what is already common knowledge, and not to engage them in your innovations yet» (Danto, 2011, 175).

Letter 9, dated 22 November 1928, contains the last record of ambivalent benevolence, on Freud's part, towards his pupil. There is much ambivalence, as the letter starts out by communicating that, after «the friendly conversation» (Danto, 2011, 176) with Reich, the founder of psychoanalysis declared himself favourable to Reich's exoneration from the Psychoanalytic Technical Seminar. The name of Paul Federn emerges as the main opponent and critic of Reich in the upper reaches of the Viennese psychoanalytic environment. Freud declares: «I must be ready to fulfil the wishes of my other representatives» (Danto, 2011, 176) allowing it to be clearly understood that it was Federn who proposed that Reich be removed; then he recalls his pupil's numerous other commitments which require his time. However, in the last part of the letter, there is an echo of the old and patriarchal benevolence of the founder of psychoanalysis towards his young follower. Freud declares that he has consulted his daughter and writes that she «has made me realize that I was mistaken. If you do not want to hand over the leadership of the seminar [...] this may not be taken from you against your will. I will write Dr. Federn today to inform him of this» (Danto, 2011, 177). In effect, Reich remained as director of the Seminar until 1930, the year in which he moved to Berlin. It is clear, however, that his credibility and his room to manoeuvre within the Viennese psychoanalytic institution were extremely limited.

Beiträge, Studienprogramme, Forschungsreihen und Ideen von Reich gesprochen, die dem Gründer vorgelegt wurden. Neben der Behandlung von wissenschaftlichen Themen beschreibt Freud die Dynamik innerhalb der psychoanalytischen Institution und lässt die progressiven Schwierigkeiten auf institutioneller Ebene und bezüglich des Verhältnisses zwischen Reich und seinen Kollegen erkennen, bedingt durch die Ideen und die Persönlichkeit von Reich.

SCHLÜSSELWÖRTER: Aktuelle Neurose, Beziehung zwischen Individuum und Gesellschaft, dialektischer Materialismus und Psychoanalyse, die Lehre der Psychoanalyse, psychoanalytische Institution, Libido, Marxismus und Psychoanalyse.

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(translated by Carol Carmody)